



Milwaukee County

Supervisor Joseph Rice, 6th District

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For Immediate Release
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HOW DO YOU SPELL TAX RELIEF? NOT "REFERENDUM"

Sales Tax Increase Question May Mislead Voters About Taxpayer Impacts

Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee County Supervisor Joseph Rice today warned that the sales tax increase referendum questions being proposed in Milwaukee County are flawed and do not adequately inform voters.

The County Board's Parks, Energy and Environment Committee today approved referendum language asking for a one-half of one percent sales and use tax increase, estimated to raise \$60-\$65 million, of which approximately \$30 million would be intended to offset current county tax levy. The resolution authorizing the ballot question, if approved, would "guarantee" a reduction in the property tax levy.

"This is being incorrectly promoted as a means to lower taxes, when in fact it would result in a net tax increase of \$30 to \$35 million," said Supervisor Rice, a member of the Parks Committee.

Rice argued that the language of a referendum should be clear and neutral, but the proposed referendum is potentially misleading. Significant legal questions also surround the ability to bind future county boards to continue the offset of the tax levy.

"Voters should be told the true dollar impact of a sales tax increase and not be given the misimpression that this is merely a shift from one form of tax to another," Rice added.

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